

---

# **LEWIS COUNTY – STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT THRESHOLD DETERMINATION DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE (DS) AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON SCOPE OF EIS**

---

**LEAD AGENCY:** Lewis County – Community Development Department

**PROPONENT:** Skookumchuck Wind Energy Project, LLC (Sean Bell)

**FILE NUMBERS:** SEP18-0002, MSR18-0047 & SHD18-0001

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:** To construct and operate a commercial-scale wind energy generation facility called the Skookumchuck Wind Energy Project in Lewis and Thurston counties in southwestern Washington. The project is a renewable energy generation facility that will consist of up to 38 wind turbine generators (WTGs) with a nameplate capacity of up to 137 MW; a medium voltage (34.5 kilovolt) electrical collection system linking each turbine to the project substation; a project substation where the electrical voltage of the current produced will be increased from 34.5 kV to 115 kV; a temporary batch plant near the project substation yard; up to 17 mile-long aboveground 115 kV gen-tie line used to transmit the electrical current from the project area to the Puget Sound Energy (PSE) Tono substation and equipment allowing interconnection to the PSE substation; an internal access road system; upgrades to the off-site haul road; an operations and maintenance facility (O&M Facility); three permanent meteorological towers; and systems for safety, control and security. The aboveground gen-tie line is proposed to cross Hanaford Creek (Type S Water) in two locations requiring a shoreline application review.

**LOCATION OF PROPOSAL:** The Project is located in Lewis and Thurston counties in southwestern Washington and consists of many separate tax lots all on a single tract of Weyerhaeuser land managed for timber production. The Project is located 42.5 kilometers (km) (26.4 miles) southeast of Olympia, 24.9 km (15.5 miles) southwest of Eatonville, and 34 km (21 miles) east of Chehalis and the Interstate 5 corridor. The Project Area, consisting of the tax lots upon which the Project elements will be constructed, comprises approximately 20,000 acres. The Project Area includes the locations for the WTGs, the gen-tie line, the O&M Facility, and the interconnection at PSE's Tono substation. The WTGs, Project substation, and medium voltage electrical collection system will be located in the Project Area within the micrositing corridor, which consists of the lands that will be leased from Weyerhaeuser in order to implement the Project. The Project Area presents a series of ridgelines that range in elevation from approximately 450 meters (m) (1,476 feet [ft]) to 1,050 m (3,445 ft) and are separated by lower elevation stream-lined valleys. The WTGs will be constructed on the ridge. Project access roads (as distinguished from offsite haul routes) will be located on privately owned land actively managed for commercial timber production. Other Project facilities will be located in the valleys extending west of this ridgeline. The Project gen-tie line will be located within right-of-way corridors established on public and private lands. The gen-tie line will follow or will be located near existing Weyerhaeuser roads and existing industrial development and commercial forestry operations; a portion of the gen-tie line will be located in public right-of-way. The Project will interconnect at the existing PSE Tono substation, located near the Centralia Coal Plant in Lewis County. The O&M Facility will be located within a 5 acre area in Thurston County and co-located with the Weyerhaeuser Vail tree farm operations and yard facility near the unincorporated community of Vail. The Project Area is located in a rural, lightly populated area that is characterized primarily by commercial forestry use. Land in the portion of the Project Area proposed for WTG development is commercial timber land characterized by a mix of recently harvested areas and timber stands of varied ages. The closest public road to the Project site is Vail Loop Road SE.

**THRESHOLD DETERMINATION: EIS REQUIRED:** The lead agency has determined this proposal is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c) and will be prepared. This decision was made after review by Lewis County of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with this agency and such information is adopted herein by reference. This information is available for public review at the Lewis County Community Development Department or on our website at <http://lewiscountywa.gov/community-development/skookumchuck-wind-energy-sepa>

The lead agency has identified the following areas of discussion in the EIS:

- Earth: Geology, Soils and Erosion
- Plants and Animals: Habitat, Unique Species and Migration Routes
- Land and Shoreline Use: Light and Glare, Aesthetics, Historic and Cultural Preservation
- Transportation: Transportation Systems (including haul roads) and Aviation Flight Path Hazards (including civilian and military)
- Public Services and Utilities: Fire and Emergency Services (during construction and on-going), Parks or Other Recreational Facilities (including proximity to Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest) and Maintenance (including decommissioning and disaster recovery/site restoration)

**SCOPING:** Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS. You may comment on alternatives, mitigation measures, probable significant adverse impacts, and licenses or other approvals that may be required. The purpose of the scoping comment period and scoping meeting are to receive public comments on the issues to be discussed in the EIS document. The method and deadline for giving us your comments is:

1. Written comments by US Mail to the responsible official at the address below
2. Email written comments to [karen.witherspoon@lewiscountywa.gov](mailto:karen.witherspoon@lewiscountywa.gov)
3. Comments may be submitted at the **public scoping meeting** on Wednesday, May 9, 2018 between 4 pm and 8 pm at the Lewis County Courthouse, Commissioner's Hearing Room, Second Floor, 351 N.W. North Street, Chehalis, Washington

Written comments on the scope of the EIS may be submitted no later than **5:00 pm on May 31, 2018.**

**Responsible Official:**

**Lee Napier, Director**  
Lewis County Community Development  
2025 NE Kresky Avenue  
Chehalis, Washington 98532

**Contact Person:**

**Karen A. Witherspoon, AICP, Senior Project Planner**



for Responsible Official

**Date of Issue:**

**May 1, 2018**

*This SEPA determination may be appealed in writing to the Lewis County Hearings Examiner until **4 pm on June 7, 2018** at the Lewis County Community Development Permit Center. Appellants should be prepared to make **specific factual objections**. The appeal procedure is established in Lewis County Code (LCC) Section 17.110.130 and LCC Section 2.25.130. The administrative appeal fee is established by Resolution No. 18-134 of the Board of County Commissioners.*